



PITTSBURGH PERSPECTIVE

Volume II

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Number 1

Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

—1 Samuel 16:7

We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

—2 Corinthians 4:18

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Contents

From the President's Desk	2
<i>Ad Hoc</i>	3
Editorial	
The Fragments and the Fullness	4
A Sermon, by Roger Cowan	
Revelation and Faith in the Protestant Confessions	9
Edward A. Dowey, Jr.	
Human Rights and Dignity under the Laws of the Pentateuch	27
Robert M. Carson, Jr.	
Book Reviews	
Weber, <i>Ground Plan of the Bible</i>	42
Wright & Fuller, <i>The Book of the Acts of God</i>	43
Howard Eshbaugh	
Bauman, <i>The Life and Teaching of Jesus</i>	44
Fred M. Rogers	
Hudson, <i>Teach Yourself New Testament Greek</i>	46
James Arthur Walther	
Books Received	47

From the President's Desk—

"I am a cynical realist," said a friend of mine the other day. "There is no such thing," said I within myself. All cynics think they are realists—but such a thing is impossible. A cynic sees the bad out of all proportion—the unbeautiful, the hypocritical, the dishonest, the selfish—and assumes that because man has given and continues to give evidence of being highly responsive to base appetites and desires, life is hopeless.

This is not being a realist—for there *is* good—there *is* beauty—there *is* honor and integrity. And there *is* hope because there is faith, and there is faith because there is God—and man can be saved from that which is bad and for that which is good because there is Christ.

That is why there is a church, the body of Christ, to make available to all people of this or any generation the power of His redemption. And that is why there is Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, to prepare men adequately to assume responsible positions in the life of the church that the saving gospel may be made known to all men.

From time to time we need to take another look at what we are, and why. The Constitution of our school spells it out:

Art. II, 1, 2.

The purpose for which the new corporation is to be formed is that of conducting a theological seminary which shall be solely devoted to the education of suitable persons for the work of the Christian ministry and for other fields of Christian service.

For the attainment of this purpose, the Seminary shall provide instruction in the knowledge of the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and of the doctrine, order and institutes of worship taught in the Scriptures, and summarily exhibited in the Constitution of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; and shall impart to its students the various disciplines by which they may be properly prepared for service in the work of the Church; and shall cultivate in them spiritual gifts and the life of true godliness; all to the end that there may be trained a succession of able, faithful, and devoted ministers of the gospel and other Christian workers.

But training in knowledge is insufficient for our task. It must be "added to" the evidence of Christ's redemptive powers in the lives of those who would bring it to others. For that reason there is another article in our Constitution:

—Concluded on page 26.

Ad Hoc

Herewith

Again we are happy to share with you a lecture delivered in a PTS Conference Hour. Dr. Edward Dowey, who is Professor of the History of Christian Doctrine at Princeton Theological Seminary, visited our school in September and stimulated our minds with his thinking on the Reformed Confessions. We think you will enjoy reading—and perhaps studying—what he said.

Robert Carson's article was originally presented to Dr. Freedman. Mr. Carson is a graduate of the Law School of the University of Pittsburgh. He has been serving as the (student) pastor of the Avonmore Presbyterian Church, and he will receive his seminary degree in May.

Roger Cowan, who contributes the sermon, is pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church, Massillon, Ohio.

Wherewith

Rather often people who write to us for extra copies of the *Perspective* offer to reimburse us. Our stock reply, of course, is that the Seminary is glad to send the journal to folks who are genuinely interested and who have a use for it. The Editor, however, has reflected from time to time that it might not be out of keeping with our Scotch ancestry to drop a hint as to what it costs the school to send you this paper four times a year. Without prorating editorial and secretarial time, it takes just about one dollar to put one volume (four issues) of this publication in your hands. If our friends are inclined to make use of this information when they are making their contributions to the Seminary, the heart of the Comptroller will be gladdened!

Forthwith

The next literary communication you will receive will be an issue of *Panorama*, which should reach you before Commencement. The *Perspective* will not be published until June, at which time we should hope to be able to record for you the Commencement Address.

The Editor is deeply appreciative of the friendly letters that have been sent in, even (perhaps especially) when they contain constructive rejoinder or criticism. With the pressures on staff time, it is not always feasible to answer each of these communications personally; so we want to thank all of you, including those who merely had kind thoughts and good intentions.

—J. A. W.

The Fragments and the Fullness

Text: *Do people live after they die?*—Chris Cowan, circa 1959.

IT WAS ONE of those frequent breakfast conversations between a groggy father who should have put down the book at eleven and a chipper four year old who persistently sandwiched rhetoric between bites on his toast. Breakfast time, with all the sweet or somber overtones that it carries, is no time to talk anything—let alone theology! But I have learned that fathers control the conversation no more than they did when they were simply husbands. So I always expect the unexpected; and when Chris begins his bacon barrage, I simply grant a bleary nod of acquiescence.

This particular morning we jumped in one leap from the relative strength of lions and tigers to the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body. Chris, who knows nothing of comparative religions and who has spent his life within the kindergarten context of the Christian Community, began by asking—

Chris: Do people live after they die?

Daddy: Yes, Jesus showed us this.

Chris: Until Jesus showed us, we didn't know that, did we?

I put down my coffee and grabbed some note paper, grateful for a text from one so young, so early in the

day. And, of course, Chris was right on center. For this is where Christian faith is lodged—in a God who by resurrection showed us what we didn't know, won a victory we couldn't win, brought life and immortality to light.

Faith that Jesus Christ has broken death, that He is alive as Lord and Saviour, is the central Christian assumption. In the mighty acts of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, God has given a pivot point, a source and an end to human life. Christ Jesus as Saviour is the One who makes life whole.

Yet, our lives are largely fragmentary in a fragmentary world. And fragments can at best eke out survival. When you spend all your time holding yourself together, there's slight chance that you can touch the lives of others with hope and help and love. God's order in Christ finds little counterpart in man's disorder. We have not yet asked basically enough what a sovereign, unified, triumphant God has to say to our broken and compartmentalized world. Regard the divisions of our day: We have personal selves and business selves, one mind for church, another for pleasure. And seldom is there a fusing so that work becomes worship or worship

a joy. There are divisions within each classification and then divisions of the divisions. If you're Westerner, there's no place like California; if you're Easterner, you've still got New York. If you're Southerner, you've got tradition and money and the money tradition; if you're Northerner, you ask, "Then why do you want our industry?"

If you were for Nixon, you had to dislike Kennedy. If you're labor, you fight capital. If you own one share of GM stock, you automatically hate Reuther who hates Hoffa who hates—well, that brings us back to Kennedy, who should be mentioned cautiously in a Presbyterian sermon!

If you're a New York gentile, you hate the Jews, who glare at the Negroes, who scowl at the Puerto Ricans. Meanwhile the Puerto Ricans resolve to show us all. Harry Golden claims they already have plans to put a centerfielder on the Braves when Aaron hangs up his spikes and a singer on the Paramount stage when Belafonte makes enough to feel accepted.

If you're English, you fear Russia, which fears West Germany, which fears the rise of DeGaulle's France. We line up as West against East though it requires sharing the bed with Franco. So, Khrushchev woos Tito, who woos Nasser, who plays them both against each other to save Egypt's skin.

We line up as Protestants and

Romans against Communists, who are more dangerous to us both than we are to each other. We will even call on Islam, preferring holy wars to Siberian confinement.

So life is a fragmentized, dehumanized alignment in which we, whatever our side, are always right—and fight it out with all others. We move only in our own little circle and repeat to each other the racial memory of that "Old Gang of Mine." And when history moves to break up the old gang with stubborn new facts—we have another drink and sing another chorus.

Now what is behind this? The surface scuffling is only indicative of personal and inner cleavage. It's the old story of the divided house not standing. Outer disorder simply reflects inner chaos. We can never hope to do what is right until we first learn who it is we are. The reason we relate ourselves so enthusiastically and sporadically to relative and partial causes is because we have never been fully grasped by an ultimate and unifying cause. At the heart of fragmented man lies a deep anxiety which is both problem and hope.

Anxiety is a problem because it ties us up in knots when we need to act; it makes us tense when we need to be calm and sure. It fills our souls with an ultimate dread: the awareness of our death. Psychology has taught us that righteous indignation is not always so righteous and that

our holy cause may just not be very holy. So we hesitate to embrace anything, not ever being sure we are right. Meanwhile life's end moves ominously toward us, and we may ask why all the effort since so soon we die? The next short step may be sulking resignation to a world in which all the moves are already made, a trapped confinement which begins in a hospital room rented by parents and ends in a casket financed on time by children. Meanwhile existence becomes a matter of a new car every two years or a second car every three years; a washer-dryer with juke-box-like selector; and Stereo when Hi-Fi is so soon sterile.

Which means we are bored. Bored because we feel that life ought to offer more than indoor plumbing and two weeks at the Lake. Like the lady in the novel we "want to take life by the throat and choke it." Anxiety—indecision, fear of annihilation, lack-lustre living, trapped resentment—all this is behind our fragmented humanity. This is our problem.

But it is also our hope. Only people who are fragmented know the need of being whole. When life is empty, we know the importance of fullness. When we are hemmed in and caught, we look toward freedom. When we are absolutely conformed, we sense that life needs to be transformed.

So anxiety may be hope because it can well be the underside of faith. At least our generation is not flippant

about the future. If we have digressed from expecting too much to expecting too little, we have yet learned to take life seriously. If anxiety combines frustration and failure, then perhaps we will hear again of the forgiveness of sins. If life is no longer seen through rose-colored glasses, neither is it regarded as a simple triumph any Sophomore can win in a breeze.

Yet, anxiety, while it may be the underside of faith, is not faith. From despair we ask in what or whom is there hope? What ultimates are there in a relative world? Seeing that everyone we know also dies, to whom may we look with confidence?

CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT is a frank facing of all we have described—our fragmentation and its causes—plus an affirmation. The plus is the God who sends good news to a sick world. And the name of that news is Jesus Christ. If we are broken—Christ is whole. If we travel on diverse roads which wind up in blind alleys—Christ is yet the Road to the Father. If we are trapped and confined—He is beckoning to wider circles of freedom and fellowship. If our days are flat and stale—He is life joyous and full. If time is filled with second bests and might have beens and greater goods—He is truth manifestly clear. If we dwell in darkness within and without—He is light exposing the depth of our heart's dark

recess and illumining the way before us.

All this He is and more. And Chris is proved right: "Until Jesus showed us, we didn't know that." He is the Revealer—and in Him, says Paul, is "all the fullness of God." It is He whom we preach and in whom we are grounded for now and evermore. We fall back on Him not alone as last resort but as first hope; "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Life-through we will be haunted by broken dreams and partial joys and painful severings of familiar ways. These will be accompanied by lingering regrets and frequent guilt and some foreboding—with no assurance of what's right or best. We will persist in morbid, circular, self analysis and mistaken notions of knowing what is best for other people. We will rise at dawn and sleep at night thinking of muffed chances, wanting to do over or say again, scheming to get out and break loose and find freedom in some far country. We will hurt and be hurt, devote much energy to the trivial, and feel little toward our neighbor's real needs. A few laughs, an occasional embrace, and emptiness again. And we will ask once more, "Why was I born?"

But it is for such times and thoughts that God's Christ has been cut out. He fits the size of our humanity. In our despairing moments

the One to whom we belong grasps us. Amid our decay and separations and daily little dyings—comes one in whom there is neither fragmentation nor death. He guides us out from microscopic viewpoints, our self-hate engendering other-hatred, our desperate self-excusing. His mercy is holy enough to shame us and broad enough to draw us to Him by the simple compulsion of a love that won't quit.

Looking at Christ, we find who it is we are and to whom we belong.

Thus He comes as Saviour—

opening our eyes to humanity,
drawing together the pieces,
binding the wounds,

freeing us from self captivity, making Himself known as both light and salvation. We say with Chris, "Until Jesus showed us, we didn't know that."

But, my son and my friends, He *did* show us. And so life's big business becomes showing Him that we have heard and seen and now proclaim by faith and life.

We receive the joy and wonder of being loved which in turn frees us to love ourselves and others and God. We repeat, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," knowing the statement is more affirmation than repetition. We look Christward for ultimate hope and unifying faith in our disordered years.

From Him we receive the gift of nonchalance—the strainless ease of

being in His care, while our world is kept in His holy will, our work and witness preceded and followed by the work and witness of others, our failures and betrayals held hard by His mighty mercy. From Him we receive also the gift of tension—the sleepless concern for all those whom Christ loves, the anxious prayer that His kingdom may be established in its justice and fullness—the perceptive awareness of the tug and pull between what is and what should be, the signs and groans and longings for the homeland of which the world is but a colony.

With ultimate confidence we trust Him who is Ultimate Confidante. With daily prayers and thanksgivings and anticipations we look to Him. Yet, between the ultimate hope and the daily prayer, at the bend of the centuries where we reside, remains uncertainty; an uncertainty which knowledge cannot penetrate and which makes faith God's mandatory

grace to men like us. In that uncertainty and with deep concern, we preach with urgency. We see that an identical congregation is seldom, if ever, gathered twice; we see every hour of worship not only as eternal dialogue but as inclusive beginning and ending. We arise each day to a dawn that comes but once. We sense every separation and goodbye as irretrievable.

What then remains? Only the love of a God in whom there is no darkness nor death, neither separation nor good-bye. We look to Him for the stillness that heals the clamor, the peace that lies at the heart of the storm. We who live and die look up to the Lord of life and death saying "Thanks be to Him who has loved us and given Himself for us. Thanks be to Him in Whom there are no good-byes. Thanks be to Him who gives us the victory!"

—Roger A. Cowan, '54.

Revelation and Faith in the Protestant Confessions

by EDWARD A. DOWEY, JR.*

THE FOLLOWING PAGES are an exercise in the generally defunct discipline of "comparative symbolics" aimed at refreshing our minds about some of the classic documents from the Reformation and from the seventeenth century. Since revelation has been the prime concern of theology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it may be that new perspectives have been won from which to view these older statements.

I. Lutheran Confessions

One of the commonest devices for distinguishing Reformed from Lutheran theology during and after the Reformation is to say that the former was built upon the "formal" principle of the Reformation (namely, the authority of canonical Scripture) while the latter derived its structure and content from the "material" principle (justification by grace through faith). Without discussing the appropriateness of these terms, we can affirm that the most casual reader of the confessions will notice

the phenomena to which they refer. The Reformed family of confessions frequently list the canonical books of Scripture identified by "inspiration of the Holy Spirit" as the "Word of God"; and, with some exceptions, the article on Scripture as revelation stands at or near the beginning of the statement. By contrast, none of the Lutheran confessions contains a canonical list or a doctrine of the Spirit that accredits the canon. The basic Lutheran document, the Augsburg Confession, contains only the remark that it accepts nothing "discrepant with" Scripture.¹ In all the Book of Concord, there is no article devoted to delimiting the canon, book by book, although the problem of the canon and the solution to it (exclusion of the apocrypha, and denial of the independent authority of church tradition) were identical in Lutheran and Reformed circles.

The Preface to the Epitome of the Formula of Concord² comes nearest to developing a formal doctrine of Scripture in these terms among the

* See *Ad Hoc*, p. 3.

¹Part I, conclusion; Part II, preface.

²Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, III, pp. 93-97.

Lutheran articles. Even here the canon is not mentioned as such, although there is no doubt that the "prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and New Testament," "which are the only rule and norm according to which all dogmas and doctors ought to be esteemed and judged," are the same 66 books which the Reformed writers felt called upon to enumerate. The Formula is actually more detailed about a kind of secondary canon of symbolical books (the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon's Apology, Luther's Smalcald Articles and his two Catechisms,—"the latter as it were, the Bible of the Laity") than it is about the canon. The relation of the symbolical books to Scripture is very well put:

But other symbols and other writings, of which we made mention a little while ago, do not possess the authority of a judge—for this dignity belongs to Holy Scripture alone; but merely give testimony to our religion, and set it forth to show in what manner from time to time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the Church of God by the doctors who then lived

The consensus of Scripture and the symbolical books is characteristically referred to as the "unanimous consent of the Catholic Christian faith." The apocrypha are not referred to by name, but are presumably judged (as they were actually rejected in practice) in the words:

. . . a clear distinction is retained between the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and all other writings . . .

But other writings, whether of the fathers or of the moderns, with whatever name they come, are in no wise to be equalled to the Holy Scriptures, but are all to be esteemed inferior to them, so that they be not otherwise received than in the rank of witnesses.

Later, however, the theologian Leonhard Hutter (d. 1616) in one of the most widely used handbooks of Lutheran theology included the apocrypha among Scripture, which he divided into "canonical" and "apocryphal."

Two further omissions in the Lutheran statements stand out at once for anyone schooled in the Reformed Catechisms and Confessions: (1) there is no doctrine of inspiration, *i.e.*, of the original giving of sacred oracles or writings, and (2) there is no doctrine of a special work of the Spirit by which the canon is identified as such. This does not mean that there is any lack among the 16th and 17th century Lutheran theologians of discussions of at least the former of these topics. But it is a significant matter that the results do not appear in the churchly documents. When Edmund Schlink discusses the absence of these "presupposed" materials (canon, inspiration) from the documents and accounts for it, he claims that the interest of Lutheran theology was not in a book as such, but in the redemptive content:

This does not mean that Luther's own freedom with the canon was followed in these documents: all books seem to have equal authority, if citations from them are an indication. But the inner meaning of Scripture is Gospel, which is chiefly forwarded by preaching and hearing. Thus the emphasis, says Schlink, is on the *hearing* and the "inspiration of the hearer," not on the inspiring of sacred writings. That is to say, faith (the reception of the Gospel) is central and primary in the Lutheran statements in such a way that a teaching about the Bible is not clearly formulated anywhere. "Rather, the implicit doctrine of Scripture must be gleaned from the actual use of Scripture [in the confessional documents] and from the expressed attitude to other sources of knowledge that might lay claim to being norms of church doctrine."³ But when we study the subject of faith (the "inspiration of the hearer") we find that it is generally so closely tied up with the rejection of works as a means of salvation⁴ and with an insistence on trust as opposed to "mere" knowledge, that it is extremely difficult to attribute any noetic quality whatever to the term.

The significance of this matter has been taken chiefly in two ways: (1) by the Reformed tradition, which as

we shall see has usually defined this matter quite clearly, the Lutheran manner is regarded as a deceptive omission. An omission, because the topic is simply not present, and deceptive, because the subject matter is implicit in the documents and in fact had to be formulated extra-confessionally by theologians in their own works; (2) by the Lutherans, this omission is regarded as a virtue in that it shows the true motif of Lutheran theology (not the giving of a canon, but the giving of saving faith to believers,) and it avoids the error of the Reformed tradition which always tended to objectivism in matters both of dogma and ethics.

II. Reformed Confessions: Sixteenth Century

A. THE FIRST HELVETIC CONFESSION

The first Helvetic Confession was a work of Reformed theologians in 1536, several years after Zwingli was dead and several years before John Calvin became a man to be reckoned with. The Alsatian and Swiss participants were Bucer and Capito of Strassburg; Bullinger, Myconius, Grynaeus, Judae, and Megander of several Swiss cities. This confession shows distinctive marks of its Reformed origins and also a good deal of Lutheran language.

³E. Schlink, *Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 24; Chap. i, *passim*.

⁴Aug. Conf. chap. iv-vi, xx.

Quite unlike the Lutheran statements, the biblical canon (not enumerated) is equated at the outset with the Word of God (*Scriptura canonica verbum Dei*), and is said to be inspired in its origin by the Holy Spirit through Prophets and Apostles. There is no mention of illumination of the hearer or of the process by which the canon was fixed and preserved. In a pattern followed by the fuller and more widely accepted Second Helvetic Confession, a second chapter takes up the subject, *De Interpretatione Scripturae*. The third and fourth chapters (*De Antiquis Patribus* and *De Traditionibus Hominum*) are really sub-divisions that should be indented under chapter ii. The principle stated briefly in chapter ii ("The holy divine Scripture shall be interpreted in no other way than out of itself and explained by the norm of faith and love") is applied in chapter iii to a most generous acceptance of such fathers as interpret Scripture under this norm as "chosen instruments of the Holy Spirit"; and in chapter iv to a rather abrupt dismissal of "traditions," implying that they generally "lead away" from the gospel. It is in chapter v and the later chapters xii-xiv that the principle of faith and justification is expressed. This material strikes one as a quite Lutheran part of the confession; and insofar as "through faith alone" is Luther's great phrase which practically created the

Reformation, the judgment is correct.

A matter of special interest is that beside the establishment of revelation in the canonical books on the authority of their inspiration, there appears under the "purpose and goal" (*Zweck, scopus*) of Scripture in chapter v and under the "purpose and goal" of the "evangelical doctrine" in chapter xii, almost identical material; both point to grace alone and faith alone as the *scopus*. We have two different "topics" here (ch. i-v on Scripture, cf. ch. xii-xiv on faith and the gospel), but both come to the same thing. I think that we shall discover that, while the Lutheran confessions dealt with Scripture only in the Formula of Concord, the Reformed confessions constantly expanded the doctrine of Scripture into considerations of inspiration, preservation, inerrant originals, identification of the canon by witness of the Spirit, etc.,—at the same time they were running the danger of almost eliminating faith as a special topic. In the First Helvetic Confession, we have in a Reformed statement the two so-called principles of formal authority and material effect both present and stated separately. But we also have them practically identified in their "purpose and goal." Two salient and admirable features of both Lutheran and Reformed confessions, thus, are quite marked, even though their relation to one another may leave something to be desired.

A statement not in the body of the

Confession, but apparently the work of Bullinger and Judae⁵ as they subscribed to it, is particularly revealing of an attitude borne out in the subsequent Reformed practice of drawing up local or national confessions rather than seeking one single formula of concord as did the Lutherans in Germany. The statement reads:

We emphatically do not wish by means of these articles to prescribe a single rule of faith for all churches, for we recognize no other rule of faith than Holy Scripture. Whoever therefore agrees with this, is already in agreement with us even though he uses other expressions than those of our confession. For we should pay attention to the truth of the matter itself, not to the words. We grant everyone the freedom to use those ways of expression which seem most appropriate for his own church and will ourselves make use of the same freedom, at the same time defending the true meaning of this confession against any distortion.⁶

This statement, along with that from the Preface to the Lutheran Formula of Concord about the relation of ancient creeds to the Bible would seem to be of real, current value in assessing the status of confessional documents in our day. In this connection compare also the Preface to the Second Helvetic Confession.⁷

B. THE SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION

The "talented, wise, firm and com-

passionate" Heinrich Bullinger (d. 1575) was in himself a kind of Reformation—or at least Reformed—consensus both in theology and in his attitudes toward political and ecclesiastical matters. This does not imply that he was eclectic in mind, but that bridging the generations from Luther and Zwingli to Calvin and after, and bridging the theological emphasis between Geneva and Strassburg (if not further north), and bridging both the English Channel and the boundaries of Poland and Hungary by lively correspondence and contact with refugees, he nonetheless preserved a remarkable inner coherence and an unobtrusive individuality in his life and thought. Thus it could happen that a long Latin summary of his personal faith, written for his own use, became one of the most generally accepted Reformation confessions and is still the official standard of several Reformed communions. Since Bullinger had participated in writing the First Swiss confession, it is not surprising that certain features recur in his own statement. The most obvious one is that the titles of the first two chapters on Scripture and its interpretation correspond with those in the First Helvetic, and the subject of saving faith is similarly given separate treatment much later in the disposition.⁸

⁵Schaff, III, p. 389, n. 2.

⁶*Ibid.*, II, p. 389, n. 2.

⁷*Ibid.*, III, p. 234.

⁸Second Helv. ch. i contains the subject matter of First Helv. ch. i and v; Second Helv. ch. ii includes the material of First Helv. ii-iv.

The subject of revelation represents throughout an expansion and change of emphasis over against the First Helvetic Confession in that revelation in the believer plays a larger role alongside the doctrine of an original inspiration, indeed nearly all the weight is placed on revelation in the living Church via preaching (*Praedicatio verbi est verbum Dei*) and sound exegesis. It is not the work of the Spirit in ancient writers that is emphasized, but the present inward illumination of the living believer. And that, not primarily as related to the Book, but in preaching. The full identification of the Word with preaching is unique in this confession (v. chapter i, par. 4-7). The *illuminatio* of chapter i would seem to be not the accrediting, *en bloc*, of a canon, but the enlightenment that is saving faith (v. chapter xvi, par. 1-2). The formal authority is explicitly there, but the *scopus* is the redeeming gospel.

This confession surpasses not only other Reformed confessions, but the Lutheran statements as well in preferring clearly the *viva voce* communication as the most appropriate form of revelation. Luther's own linking of law and letter (writing) as against Gospel and Spirit (oral communication) is reflected not only in chapter i, but for example, in chapter xiii, par. 3 and 4, where writing and historical accounts are compared and contrasted with preaching.

The "history" of what Christ did and taught is called Gospel, but so also:

The Preaching and Scripture of the Apostles in which they expound to us how the Son was given us of the Father, and, in him, all things pertaining to life and salvation, is truly called the doctrine of the Gospel (*doctrina Evangelica*); so that not even in the present time, if it be sincere, does it lose that worthy name.

The same preaching of the Gospel is by the Apostle termed Spirit and "the ministry of the Spirit" (II Cor. iii. 7): because it lives and works through faith, in the ears, yea, in the hearts, of believers by illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Compare also the definition of saving faith in ch. xvi:

Christian faith is not an opinion or human persuasion, but a sure trust, and an evident and steadfast assent of the mind; it is a most sure comprehension of the truth of God, set forth in the Scriptures and in the Apostles' Creed; yea, and of God himself, the chief blessedness; and especially of God's promise, and of Christ, who is the consummation of all the promises. And this faith is the mere gift of God, because God alone of his power does give it to his elect, according to measure; and that when, how, and to whom, and how much he will; and that by *his Holy Spirit, through the means of preaching the Gospel and of faithful prayer . . .

In view of the tremendous importance for theology, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of the Word of God conceived as an inerrant canon based upon an elaborate doctrine of inspiration over against the Word of God conceived as primarily kerygma, this treatment of the topic

in the Second Helvetic is very instructive. If the kerygmatic origin of Christian confession and the kerygmatic quality of Christian theology, newly recovered in the twentieth century, are to be expressed confessionally in our day, we may find useful support in the teachings of the Second Helvetic on Scripture, preaching, and faith.

Correspondingly, in a day when "hermeneutic" is the catch-word of much theological discussion, the second chapter of this confession, "On Interpretation," may offer a helpful precedent. If the solutions it presents are disappointing in terms of the start made in chapter one, at least some apprehension of the problem is present. The preoccupation of Protestantism in the late sixteenth century was to maintain Scripture *alone* as the authority for faith and doctrine, over against an authoritative church tradition that took three forms: creeds of the early councils, the unanimous consent of the early fathers, and the still vital deposit of oral communication (v. Council of Trent, third session). Further, there was a problem of the proper version of the Bible, for the Reformers all realized that there were hermeneutic principles implied in the sacrosanct Vulgate that could presumably be circumvented by attention to the original languages. The Second Helvet-

ic Confession moves within this context of problems rather than taking its point of departure from its own teaching about faith. It shares the predispositions of the literary humanism that was strong among the Swiss Reformers, namely, that the original text seen in its historical setting would yield rather easily its "true and genuine" meaning which was, in the main, its orthodox interpretation in the early Church. The whole case is made in the opening paragraph of chapter ii, and the remainder of the chapter is devoted to the problem of accepting and rejecting ancient non-biblical materials on the strength of this conviction. There are good and wholesome principles there; but I would suggest that what we have are primarily counter arguments to Trent rather than an adequate account of what Bullinger himself, Calvin, and some others were actually doing in the process of biblical exposition. It seems to me that the Westminster doctrine of Scripture and its interpretation⁹ could be called an expanded and refined version of this material. A tremendous difference exists, however, in that the Westminster literature does not contain material comparable to what we have just cited from the Second Helvetic on preaching and the illumination of faith. We shall see shortly that the two confessions stemming more or

⁹West. Conf., ch. i, par. 6-10.

less directly from Calvin (the French and the Belgic) are also lacking in this regard, and the lack seems to increase in proportion to the distance from Calvin. Or is it in proportion to the increasingly polemic stance of Reformed Theology over against Tridentine Catholicism and Lutheranism? At any rate, if we realize that statements about revelation in the Reformation centuries were made between two polar attractions—formal biblical authority for the church, and personal illumination in the gift of saving faith to the believer—probably we can derive some instruction for our time even though the polarities are differently described.

C. THE FRENCH CONFESSION

The French Confession was sketched by Calvin and his student de Chandieu (known also as Sadeel) and revised somewhat when accepted by the French Synod of Paris (1559). It was adopted by the Synod of Rochelle in 1571, hence the designation also as the Confession of Rochelle.

Certain observations can, I think, be made briefly in view of the foregoing material: (1) the doctrine of revelation in Scripture appears near the beginning, curiously sandwiched in between two parts of the doctrine of God. The doctrine of God in chapter i centers on the "simple essence" of the Creator, while the Trinity comes in chapter vi, after the in-

tervening articles present special revelation; (2) revelation is presented first as the revelation in creation and providence, "secondly and more clearly, in his Word" and the latter in two states: "oracles" and the committing of the oracles to writing or Holy Scripture; (3) canonical Scripture is listed, book by book, in chapter iii, with no mention of the apocrypha; (4) the "testimony and inward illumination of the Holy Spirit" rather than "common accord" and the "consent of the Church" makes us know "that these books are canonical," and "enables us to distinguish them from other ecclesiastical books"; (5) the sole authority of Scripture over all traditions, customs, decrees, councils, visions, etc., allows nonetheless the confession of the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds. This chapter v contains material similar to that on "interpretation" in the Second Helvetic, entirely assimilated to the problem of authority; (6) faith is dealt with as a topic separate from the aforementioned "internal testimony of the Spirit" in chapter xxi as "illumination." Yet it does not seem submerged in justification (cf. chapters xviii-xxiii) and it is linked very well with a fine statement both of its gracious character and its lasting ethical fruits (cf. regeneration, chapter xxii).

While the canon is listed in this confession, there is strictly speaking no doctrine of "inspiration." Rather

the question of the origin and preservation of Scripture is completely bypassed in the insistence that the work of the Spirit is *to us* enabling us (presumably the living church) to recognize what books are canonical (*qui nous les fait discerner*). There is not a word here about prophets and apostles or the familiar proof texts on inspiration.

It should be noted that the two separated discussions of illumination (one attached to Scripture, ch. iv, and one attached to saving faith, chapter xxi) also characterize Calvin's *Institutes*. This has caused serious interpretative problems about whether Calvin himself gave the impulse toward the final and more radical separation as it occurred in Calvinist orthodoxy and, e.g., the Westminster Confession. In my opinion, which need not be argued here in detail, Calvin's own thought clearly places the emphasis on revelation in the hearer, in faith, and presents the teaching about inspiration only sporadically in his writings as a corollary of faith, rather than the basis of it. Still Calvin gave ample (and unfortunate) impulse to orthodoxy by his three chapters on Scripture in the *Institutes*, Book I, even though he clearly stated in them that this was a brief excursus on a topic that would be dealt with elsewhere (I. vii. 5). If the fate of theology could

ever be said to hinge on the failure to notice a cross reference, it is here.¹⁰ Beside the French Confession, in this regard, the view of Calvin that I am expressing receives strength by consulting the Instruction in Faith (1537), paragraphs 3 and 14, and the Geneva Catechism (1541) questions 300-308. We run across a very different approach in another confession which presumably stands in a direct line with the French, the Belgic Confession.

D. THE BELGIC CONFESSION

This Confession, composed in 1561 by Guy de Bres and some others for the Netherlands churches, variously revised and finally adopted in the form here discussed by the Synod of Dort in 1619, presents some significant contrasts to the French Confession on the subject of revelation. In general it is patterned on the French document, but shows greater elaboration and precision throughout.

As in the French Confession, the subject of revelation is inserted between two parts of the doctrine of God, thus covering chapters ii-vii as follows: (1) [Chap. ii] Revelation in creation and providence come first, leaving all men "without excuse" (this latter was omitted in the French Confession); then, secondly, revelation through the Word for sal-

¹⁰Cf. *Opera Selecta* III, p. 71, lines 14-17.

vation; (2) [Chap. iii] As God the Spirit moved ancient holy men to speak his word, so "afterward" with a special care for our salvation he commanded prophets and apostles "to commit his revealed Word to writing; and he himself wrote with his own finger the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures"; (3) [Chap. iv] List of Canonical books; (4) [Chap. v] The testimony of the Spirit witnesses in our heart that they (canonical books) are from God." Chapter vi is a list of apocrypha excluded from authority for faith, although they may be read in church; (5) [Chap. vii] This material is much as in the confessions previously cited on the relation of Scripture to councils and traditions, but two changes might be mentioned: the term "infallible rule" is here applied to the Scriptures; and the three early creeds are not mentioned at this point. But in the following chapters viii-xi on the Trinity, the whole doctrine is restated with elaborate proof texts, (including Gen. 1:26) before the conclusion, "Therefore, in this point, we do willingly receive three creeds. . . ." (6) [Chap. xxii-xxiii] The concept of faith is dealt with in conjunction with justification and imputation, but is absorbed by it, having no such independence as it still retained in the French Confession.

In the Belgic Confession, then, we

have the strongest emphasis yet on the inspired writing down of sacred oracles—and the curiously literal insistence that God did the Decalogue "with his own finger!" Further, the work of the Spirit in faith has been entirely absorbed by the testimony of the Spirit which accredits the canon. And this latter is reinforced by the self-evidence (*autopistia*) of Scripture so that "the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling." If we have shown a genuine variation from the French Confession here, we may drop the matter for the moment, to turn to it again in the Westminster Standards.

E. THE SCOTTISH CONFESSION

The Scottish Confession, composed in 1560 by John Knox and some associates, subsequent to his stay in Geneva, shows a strong deviation from most of the statements that we have observed. The Preface denies that it contains anything but what Scripture teaches, and affirms that all comes "fra the mouth of God, that is, fra his haly scriptures." The first article presents the Triune God, then proceeds at once to the creation of man (art. ii) and original sin (art. iii). But, while the article on sin is strongly stated ("the Image of God utterlie defaced in man and his posteritie"), the writers seem almost hurrying to announce quickly the cure of sin, which is the subject of

the latter half of this article as well as the entire article iv, "Of the Revelation of the Promise." Having said that all die who are not regenerate, the words are added:

quhilk regeneration is wrocht be the power of the holie Gost, working in the hartes of the elect of God, ane assured faith in the promise of God, reveiled to us in his word, be quhilk faith we apprehend Christ Jesus with the graces and benefites promised in him. (art. iii).

[For God after the fall] did seek Adam againe, call upon him, rebuke his sinne, convict him of the same, and in the end made into him ane most joyfull promise, to wit, that the seed of the woman . . . (art. iv).

Thus the concept of faith in the redeeming promise as the work of the Spirit, beginning in Adam, is stated prior to all concern for the question of a formal authority for doctrine. From this first mention of the "promise" the confession proceeds through Old Testament history ("his Kirk in all ages fra Adam, till the cumming of Christ Jesus in the flesh") to the Incarnation, Election (right in the middle of Christology!), Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, and then in article xii to "Of Faith in the Holy Gost." Without illustrating at length, it may be said that this concept of "trew faith in Christ Jesus" is kept to the fore in this confession through the doctrines of the Spirit and the Church. It is thus not in danger of being changed to a principle of formal authority as in other documents

we have already commented on.

Revelation as Scripture is first treated in article xviii as one of the marks of the Church and as the judge of doctrine. A fine linkage of canon, redemptive purpose, and guidance of the Spirit in interpreting Scripture is expressed as follows:

And sik [such, i.e., churches bearing the true marks of the church] kirks, we the inhabitants of Scotland, professoris of Christ Jesus, professis our selfis to have in our citties, townes, and places reformed, for the doctrine taucht in our Kirkis, conteined in the writen Worde of God, to wit, in the buikis of the Auld and New Testamentis, in those buikis we meane quhilk of the ancient have been reputed canonicall. In the quhilk we affirme, that all thingis necessary to be beleaved for the salvation of mankind is sufficiently expressed. The interpretation quhairof, we confesse, neither appertaines to private nor publick persone, nether zit to ony Kirk . . . bot appertaines to the Spirite of God, be the quhilk also the Scripture was written . . . quhilk is the Spirite of unitie, is in nathing contrarious unto himselfe.

Articles xix and xx on scriptural authority and Church Councils repeat the familiar principle that God himself speaking in Scripture is the sole source and norm for faith.

The Scottish Confession, thus, would seem to represent even better than the French, the side of Reformation teaching in which faith rather than biblical authority is at the center of the church's theological activity—although, of course, biblical authority is strongly affirmed.

F. THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

One of the best loved documents of the Reformation not only in Germany, but in the Hungarian, Dutch, and American Reformed Churches is this product of the two Heidelberg theologians Ursinus and Olevianus, first published in 1563. It shows a remarkable freshness, both of style and structure. Like the Scottish Confession, the Heidelberg reflects certain Reformation emphases that are lost in the more direct lineage of Westminster (French, Belgic, Dort, and Irish Articles). It begins with a comprehensive trinitarian affirmation of the reality of redemption, then proceeds through a catechetical exposition of this reality in three parts: sin, redemption, and thankfulness.

The Heidelberg Catechism does not contain any more articulated doctrine of Scripture than do the early Lutheran documents. In Ursinus' commentary on the catechism, this topic belongs to a prolegomena, prior to the analysis of Question I. Granted that the catechetical form of the document itself over against the lectures to theological students that make up the commentary might account for this characteristic—still, catechetical form did not prevent the Westminster Shorter Catechism from introducing the canon as the "only rule" right at the beginning. Throughout, of course, biblical materials are used and it seems to me that the organization of the doctrine is emi-

nently Pauline: but it should be taken seriously that the formal prolegomena is not included within the catechism. In Ursinus' commentary there can be seen the double-sidedness of the Reformed teachings in the following: (1) he treats of the whole canon as a unit, supported by some questionable rational evidences, yet (2) the bulk of his treatment regards Scripture not primarily as a canon but as "law and gospel," which comprise the whole "doctrine of the church." The confession itself is oriented more as is the Scottish Confession with a brief treatment of sin and a joyous overwhelming of this teaching with the promise of redemption. However, while the Scottish document makes use of biblical history as the churchly context of all it teaches, the Heidelberg adopts the more traditional churchly structure of the Apostles' Creed. In both instances, however, an account of the living and redeeming faith of the church takes precedence over a formal statement of biblical authority both as the point of departure and as the chief architectonic principle.

Heidelberg's Question XXI is an interesting epitome of this matter in mid-sixteenth century Reformed theology, showing both its identity with and its distinctions from the Lutheran mode of expression:

What is true faith?

It is not only a certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God

has revealed to us in his word, but also a hearty trust which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake Christ's merits.

The "not only . . . but also" twice repeated should not be read as if the latter element each time were an appendix or even as *a fortiori*, for it is clear from Question I and the entire structure of the Catechism that the latter half of the two statements is the fundamental and comprehensive one.

I would be inclined to place the Scottish and Heidelberg Confessions together as indicating a markedly Reformed theology and ethos in a form in which the motif of biblical authority does not exert a centripetal influence on everything else. The problem of biblical authority in them is certainly not "solved"; but at least it represents a stage of openness at which these may be a point of contact for a contemporary statement, while the Westminster literature seems to have achieved a systematic refinement on the base of a wrongly oriented view of biblical authority that precludes contemporary development. I find the First and Second Helvetic Confessions and the French Confession in the same category as these other two in this regard, but see in the Belgic and the Irish articles a road to Westminster and to the *reductio ad absurdum* of the inspired

Hebrew vowels of the Formula Consensus Helvetica (1675). Probably we could get a great deal of help from the teachers of Saumur, if we need seventeenth century support. But thanks to the victories of the international orthodoxy of Dort and Westminster, the writings of Saumurians are but little known.

III. Reformed Confessions: Seventeenth Century

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

The seventeenth century was a time of great theological activity, but much less of this activity was devoted to constructing confessional documents than in the sixteenth century. This is understandable most simply because the work so recently done hardly needed to be repeated so soon. In the Reformed tradition the Canons of Dort (1619) were of tremendous importance, but they do not offer any special treatment of the subject of this discussion. The Irish Articles (1615) are chiefly of value for what they contributed to the Westminster documents, which we are now to consider briefly. The Westminster Confession was the greatest achievement of its kind in the century. It presented a theological consensus of international Calvinism, prepared for the use of the church in Britain, which subsequently exerted great influence throughout the Reformed world. The learning and insight of the men assembled make the Assem-

bly one of the most impressive of the modern church. The doctrine of Scripture in the first chapter was the first article prepared and has been widely and justly praised as a model of confessional statement.

No effort will be made to do more than indicate summarily how the line of analysis in the preceding sections applies to Westminster. Both to avoid doubling the length of this already overlong paper and to take advantage of the readier current knowledge of Westminster, just a few remarks will be offered.

The Westminster standards were written among the various social, political, cultural, ecclesiastical, and theological pressures, propagandas, and power struggles of baroque England. This was the time of "confessional absolutism" (K. F. Eder) when each of the fragmented communions of Christendom had to compress into a century or so the laborious processes of creating a catholic orthodoxy, and of so ingratiating that orthodoxy within the culture and politics of a nation as to assure its survival. In Lutheran lands this took place much more rapidly (c. 1580), because it was an intra-mural German matter, although the worst blood spilling had occurred on the continent only shortly before the time of the Westminster divines. Among the Reformed the process took longer and the result was more comprehensive politically as well as ecclesiasti-

cally. Also there was, prior to the Westminster Assembly, a great body of elaborately articulated theology, called forth not only by the momentum toward completeness and refinement of any intellectual movement but by the elaborateness and precision of the attacks originating in the Counter-Reformation and in Lutheran theology as well as the pressures mentioned above. The result is an exceedingly long and carefully articulated statement that shows a heavy preoccupation with presenting the Bible and the principles of biblical interpretation in terms of strong, objective authority.

The first chapter, in which biblical authority is defined precisely and presented as a basic systematic postulate for the chapters that follow, is certainly the culmination of a Reformed tendency which we have observed to be present from early times. This is the tendency to shift the problem of the cognitive aspect of faith to that of biblical authority, more especially to the doctrine of inspiration. The character this article assumed, without much debate, at the Westminster Assembly is evidence for the relative success this type of formulation had achieved, given the kind of systematic-didactic-polemic theological interest that then largely ruled in Reformed circles.

It might be helpful to present an outline of the first chapter of the Westminster Confession which rep-

resents a heightening of the elements of Reformed school theology according to one of its most conservative American representatives, Benjamin Warfield. The following is from *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, pp. 191 f:

- I. The Necessity of Scripture, Par. 1.
 1. Reality and Trustworthiness of Natural Revelation.
 2. Insufficiency of Natural Revelation.
 3. Reality and Importance of Supernatural Revelation.
 4. Its complete Commitment to Inspired Scriptures.
 5. Consequent Necessity of Scripture.
- II. The Definition of Scripture, Par. 2 and 3.
 1. Extensively: The Canon, Par. 2a.
 2. Intensively: Inspiration, Par. 2b.
 3. Exclusively: The Apocrypha, Par. 3.
- III. The Properties of Scriptures, Par. 4-7.
 1. The authority of Scripture, Par. 4-5.
 - (a) The Reality and Value of the *External* Evidence.
 - (b) The Reality and Value of the *Internal* Evidence.
 - (c) The Necessity and Function of the *Divine* Evidence.
 2. The perfection of Scripture, Par. 6.
 - (a) Absolute Objective Completeness of Scripture, for the purpose for which it is given.
 - (b) Need of Spiritual Illumination for its full use.
 - (c) Place for Christian Prudence and Right Reason.
 3. The Perspicuity of Scripture, Par. 7.
 - (a) Diversity in Scripture in Point of Clearness.
 - (b) Clear Revelation of all Necessary Truth.
 - (c) Accessibility of Saving Truth by Ordinary Means.
- IV. The Use of Scripture, Par. 8-10.
 1. In Relation to its Form and Transmission, Par. 8.

- (a) Primary value and Authority of the originals.
 - (1) The immediate Inspiration of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.
 - (2) Their Providential Preservation in Purity.
- (b) The Right, Duty and Adequacy of Translations.
2. In Relation to Interpretation, Par. 9.
 - (a) Scripture Alone the Infallible Interpreter of Scripture.
 - (b) The Single Sense of Scripture.
3. In Relation to Controversies, Par. 10.
 - (a) Scripture the Supreme Judge in Controversy.
 - (b) Scripture the Test of All Other Sources of Truth.

Warfield's article, in which this outline occurs, deals with each heading at length. One can see at a glance that a very great development has taken place by which an elaborately objective authority for dogmatic theology has been thoroughly worked out and set down with much more detail and system than in any of the other documents we have mentioned.

In view of the foregoing comments about the relation of Scripture and faith, it might be well to show how much of Westminster's definition of faith refers actually to matters already settled in chapter i. The following is from chapter xiv, par. 2, entitled "Of Saving Faith":

By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself, speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,

trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

The entire first sentence is a reference to Scripture as a whole. The latter sentence is a recapitulation of the *ordo salutis* (within which "Of Saving Faith" carries materials that are largely redundant).

Chapter i of the Westminster Confession not only happens to come first, it appears as a basic postulate for all that follows. This means that the epistemological problem is disposed of, not under the concept of faith and its object, and not in terms of the Bible as a means, aid, or witness to something else (Christ, or redemption), but in terms of canon and text in Hebrew and Greek, "immediately inspired by God. . . ." and "kept pure in all ages." Further it is not only Scripture as such, but things that "by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture," (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity or the covenant of works) that constitute the body of revealed truth. In paragraphs 5 and 6, the self-evidence of Scripture and the 'necessary consequences' are presented so objectively and independently that the inward work of the Spirit as Illuminator must be introduced by the words "notwithstanding" and "nevertheless." God's early oral revelation, hav-

ing been later "committed wholly unto writing" (par. 1) and the whole of it equated unreservedly with the canon of sixty-six books, which contain within themselves their own "infallible rule of interpretation"—the task of theology is that of analyzing and synthesizing the contents of these divine writings. The body of the Confession represents this task carried out. Parenthetically, it may be suggestive to comment that the doctrine of God in chapters ii and iii bears a parallel relation to the remainder of the Confession, considered ontologically rather than epistemologically.

This assimilation of the material problem (saving faith) into the formal problem (canon and text) left the theologians nowhere to go except (as some of the Westminster divines had done already in their own studies) toward the further refinement of authority in "very words" and Hebrew vowel "pricking." It also left almost nothing to say when it got to the subject of saving faith, i.e., nothing that had not already been said. This Reformed fixation on the problem of authority was shared, by the way, with Lutheran dogmatists; and it was not very different from the Roman Catholic conception of the authority of the Vulgate. While Luther and Calvin remained heroes of faith for the Protestants and were recognized as having re-formed some of the major components of Christian

theology, neither was in any precise sense the theological teacher of the Westminster theologians. Rather it was the Swiss, Dutch, and German Reformed theologians (beginning probably with Zanchi and Beza) whose works gave the method, structure, and primary concerns that are reflected at Westminster.

It seems, then, that the Westminster divines were more concerned with formal problems than were the Reformers. It would be beside the point to criticize Westminster merely because it does not "retain the insights of the Reformers," or some such, then seek to go back a century earlier and adopt a doctrine that pleased Calvin or Bullinger. It is equally wide of the mark to treat Westminster as if it were not subject to its own dictum: "All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred, . . ." and insist on holding without variation to its orthodoxy. Also it is wrong to try to read back more modern insights into these documents, that is, to revise by interpretation. And actual revision of such a historic document seems likely to destroy its classic integrity and at the same time harness a contemporary statement in some way to an inappropriate, archaic form.

Rather, the program of the Westminster Assembly can be both ad-

mired and accepted if the documents it produced are subject to the same scrutiny and critique that the Divines exercised on the documents that came before them. It is much to the credit of the Westminster theologians that they were not content merely to repeat confessional documents that existed, or even to adopt such a book as the *Salmar* harmony of Reformed creeds as a kind of book of concord. Rather they worked within the new situation and met the needs of their respective national communions in their own time. It is possible that Westminster may be the greatest document of all for its own time, yet less suggestive for us than some earlier ones, primarily because the baroque seventeenth century itself was inspired by a spirit alien to us and to what recommends itself in our day as a way of thinking oriented by the Bible.

The obvious fact that we no longer study the "orthodox" thinkers is some evidence for this. When we consider further that it was formal authority, conceived as the detailed inerrancy of the biblical "autographs", that was the chief theological casualty of the nineteenth century, we can account for contemporary displeasure with chapter i of Westminster. But what should a "confessional" church do when its confession contains seriously constricting archaisms from the seventh century?

Conclusion

Reformation studies, especially in the theology of Luther and Calvin, have accompanied and in some measure brought about a new climate of biblical interpretation that is both post-orthodox and post-liberal (for want of better terms). This analysis of the place of Scripture among the confessional documents, if it is accurate, shows that there were strong motifs in some of the Reformation statements that are also strong today. Chiefly, in regard to our subject, these are the motifs by which the Bible is seen as an instrument of revelation under the guidance of the Spirit in the living church. The two Swiss Confessions, the Scottish Confession, and the Heidelberg Catechism represent in various ways this emphasis, with much less concern for the prime Westminster doctrine of establishing an inspired canon as the postulate of

a system and with great concern for the reality of saving faith in the believer. Since God in his mysterious and merciful providence has hid from the Christian church all the "autographs", it would seem that a basic postulate of formal authority in terms of canon and text (which really requires perfect original documents to be carried through consistently) is a most unwise way of beginning a confession. A contemporary article on revelation should deal primarily with the substantive matter of faith and redemption, of the "gratuitous promise in Christ" (from Calvin's definition of faith). The cognitive element, what it means to "know" God in Christ, should not, on the other hand, entirely be transmuted into terms of justification and forgiveness; for knowing is a component of faith, and the Bible is a means of that knowing.

From the President's Desk, concluded

Art. IX, 1, 2a: (Personal Religion)

It shall be regarded as an object of primary importance to cultivate in the students those attributes and attitudes singular to the Christian faith which are essential qualifications for the gospel ministry and other forms of Christian service. It shall be the duty of the faculty to instruct students in the means of achieving true Christian stature.

It shall be the duty of each student in all aspects of his private and public conduct to be an exemplar of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are trying to keep these standards constantly before us.

—C. E. B.

Human Rights and Dignity under the Laws of the Pentateuch

by ROBERT M. CARSON, JR.

THE STUDY of any body of laws reveals the problems, concerns, and attitudes of its place and time. Where the law is silent, it is readily apparent that the matter omitted was not a concern or problem in the day of that law. Conversely, the whole sense and spirit of a time may be projected from the pages of its laws by virtue of what is expressed. In these respects, the laws of the Pentateuch are no exception to laws in general—and a distinctive emphasis and concern clearly emerges as these laws are analyzed. Unquestionably, the Israelites had an unusually high concern for individual rights and dignity, and probably no body of laws even today can boast such high standards in this respect.¹ Furthermore, it seems apparent that this unusual concern subsisted for many centuries.

The dating of the laws of the Pentateuch presents a virtually in-

surmountable problem for present day scholarship. Any body of laws is a living organism which is made up of substantial, relatively constant factors and which nevertheless is constantly changing to adapt to successively different situations in society. This is true not only of case law but also of statute law. As a result, the statement of the existing body of law at any given time necessarily includes elements and patterns which are quite old as well as elements which are quite new. To view the laws of the Pentateuch in any other way would be a fatal mistake since they appear on their face to be statements of laws collected at given points of time (and/or places) for purposes of instruction. Furthermore, this body of laws "exhibits just that mixture of case law and apodictic law (technique and policy respectively) which we find in covenants from the Hittite

¹The immediately apparent exception to this generalization is the fact that Old Testament Laws recognized a legal status of slave. However, the exception is not as broad as it first seems since: (1) slaves in ancient Israel had certain individual rights and dignities in spite of their servitude, (2) the Old Testament laws were extremely advanced over prior and contemporary laws outside Israel, and (3) slaves under the general legal system were better off in many ways than are poor and subservient men under modern laws. Furthermore, slaves had to be freed after a given period of time as a general rule. As a result, slavery as we think of it did not exist. See the discussion *infra*.

sources, and in Mesopotamian codes as well, (and) any study which assumes that it is a later artificial composite from originally independent literary sources may be assigned rather to rational ingenuity than to historical fact."²

In spite of the problems which are involved in dating an actual collection of existing laws due to this living-growing aspect of their essence, S. R. Driver, at the end of the last century, felt able to set forth a relatively neat system for dating the Pentateuchal statements of law in relation to each other on the basis of evidence internal to the various codes themselves.³ For him, the JE legal passages as compiled in Exodus 20-23 constituted the original Pentateuchal body of law. Central in these passages was the Decalogue, which Driver believed to have been primarily derived by E from a pre-existing source, the substance of which had been engraved on the tables in the ark. Later in time came the Deuteronomic laws. These he took to be an exposition of the legal material in JE and of other later legal materials which the Deuteronomic writer had collected. Even

later came the P law codes as found in Leviticus and Numbers.

Elaborate and well-reasoned arguments were set forth by Driver to establish and substantiate such an interrelationship between the law codes of JE, D, and P; and few took issue with him initially. However, by the middle of the present century further and varied analyses had been developed by scholars of high rank to the extent that Driver's conclusions had been seriously challenged, if not fully supplanted. The resulting differences are well illustrated by the viewpoint of Robert H. Pfeiffer in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*,⁴ which was published in 1948. His approach was similar to that of Driver, but his work issued in results which were remarkably different in some respects. For example, he could flatly state (contrary to Driver as we have seen), "... it appears clearly that Deuteronomy could not have used the Covenant Code (Exodus 20:22—23:33; 34) as its source."⁵ Furthermore, he saw the Ten Commandments as not having been a part of or a precedent to the Covenant Code, but as a late summary of the legally stated ethical

²George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 14.

³S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960. This is a current edition of the book which originally was published in 1897). The materials here summarized are extracted primarily from pages 33-103.

⁴Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1948).

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 213 (parenthesis mine).

principles of early Judaism dating no earlier than 550 B. C., as stated in Deuteronomy 5, and 500 B. C., as stated in Exodus 20.⁶ "The Decalogue . . . represents a later stage in the juristic development than the codes previously discussed" (*i.e.*, The Covenant Code, The Ritual Decalogue, The Anathemas in Deut. 27:15-27).⁷ Ultimately, on the basis of his analysis, Pfeiffer pictured seven distinct bodies of law as existing in the Pentateuch, which were successively codified in the course of the eight centuries preceding 400 B. C. and which were enforced as soon as they were promulgated.⁸ The chronological order of these laws is (1) The Covenant Code, (2) The Ritual Decalogue, (3) The Anathemas in Deut. 27:15-27, (4) The Ten Commandments, (5) The Deuteronomic Code (Deut. 12-26), (6) The Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26), and (7) The Legislation of the Priestly Code (P).⁹ Thus we see from Pfeiffer results much different from those of Driver even though his basic approach was the same. Such divergences demonstrate that the matter of dating on a chronological scheme is not at all clear-cut.

The problem becomes even more complex, however, as we are con-

fronted with the new dimension asserted by recent European and English scholarship. "Robertson has drawn attention to a factor which has been insufficiently appreciated by the critics, namely, that many of the duplications, inconsistencies, and contradictions in the Pentateuch may be due to contemporary differences of ideas and usage, rather than to different stages of development which must be arranged in time sequence."¹⁰ Particularly as to the Pentateuchal laws has this approach been applied with considerable impact. At the forefront of this thinking has been the Uppsala School. "According to Pedersen . . . JE, D, and P are designations of collections which do not admit of being arranged in exact order according to an evolutionary scheme; rather they are parallel and serve to give a picture of the many-coloured variety of Israelitish culture. 'All the sources of the Pentateuch are both pre-exilic and post-exilic.'¹¹ Accordingly, Ivan Engnell*, the current voice of the Uppsala School, sees Dt. and P as representing only two different interests and not two different times.¹² Likewise, German scholarship, principally under Martin Noth and Artur Weiser, "has moved

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 228-231.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 231, 232 (parenthesis mine).

¹⁰C. R. North, "Pentateuchal Criticism," *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, H. H. Rowley, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 52, 53.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 210-270.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 64-67.

* [To be the Elliott Lecturer at PTS, April 12 and 13.—Ed.]

a good way from the original documentary hypothesis, which could picture J, E, D, and P as the free compositions of individual authors, capable of being fixed—at whatever points—upon a single date-line,”¹³ and Martin Noth has come up with essentially the same conclusion as Engnell.¹⁴ “In Von Rad the new viewpoints find clearer expression. He still works with J (*circa* 950), E (perhaps 200 years later), D (after 701), and P (between 538 and 450). But these dates are conjectural and only relate to the completion of the sources” and the Hexateuch must be read with a depth dimension and not on a flat dimension.¹⁵ As a result, we see that the whole date-line theory has been challenged and it ultimately may be found that it is “impossible to write the history of Old Testament Religion.”¹⁶ As a result, North concludes, “We can no longer use the figure of a single date-line, but must rather think of a dimensional area . . .”¹⁷

The total result is that under today's scholarship it is nearly impossible to picture with assurance the date of any Pentateuchal laws. Probably the most which can be said is that they clearly reflect at their roots an agricultural life and economy later

in time than the wanderings in the wilderness and earlier in time than the monarchy, and a holiness and ritualistic practice which possibly developed from the same roots and which as finally written down nevertheless reflects times centuries later. Certainly the laws which pertain to human life and dignity reflect the agricultural economy and scene and therefore reflect an early period. Only one short reference to a monarchical form of government appears,¹⁸ and the only substantial references to cities and city life appear in the passages relative to cities of refuge¹⁹ and to the right of redemption as to land sold within walled cities.²⁰ Certainly elaborate legal principles must have been developed with the growth and extension of the monarchy, cities and trade. These activities cannot have existed apart from extensive legal formulae. However, such laws must have been considered as existing on a totally different level from the “law of Moses” and therefore not worthy of inclusion in the historical texts. In contrast, the Pentateuchal codes must have continued to express for centuries the established policy which drew the assent of the people and theoretically at least constituted the basic principles for all legislation and

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁸Deut. 17:14-20.

¹⁹Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:1-10; Nu. 35.

²⁰Lev. 25:29-34.

judicial decisions. Without such adherence it seems unlikely that these laws would not have been lost through the changing and varied conditions in Israel and Judah in the first half of the first millenium. It is possible and even probable that the body of laws which subsisted with such longstanding influence and veneration formed something of a constitutional base for all civil and criminal laws of the nation over the succeeding centuries. This could well be the reason that these laws were not lost in the shuffle of day-to-day and year-to-year life and economy. (This theory would not necessarily clash with the fact that the holiness and ritualistic provisions reflect in many places a much later date than the provisions as to human rights and dignity, since the "constitutional text" there could have been—and must have been—amended over the years, probably because the original provisions in these respects had been too specific to allow growth without amendment, while the provisions as to human rights and dignity had been general enough to stand without amendment.) In any event, it seems likely that the laws of the Pentateuch did have a profound influence on Israelite life over many centuries.

A CLEAR CENTRAL THEME is most

apparent as the Pentateuchal laws relative to human rights and dignity are studied and analyzed. That theme is well summarized in the Levitical commandment which states, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself."²¹ Concern for the individual through love is the hallmark of the Pentateuchal laws. Even where there is little parallelism, among the provisions of the various bodies of law in the Pentateuch (and one is struck by how little real parallelism there is as to general human rights and dignity) there is a remarkable unity of aim and purpose, *i.e.*, a genuine concern for the individual human being. Everything is geared to implement this concern.

These laws demonstrate a truly remarkable concern for the poor, the slaves, and the aliens who are found within the covenant community. These groups of persons traditionally stand relatively unprotected. However, one of the greatest concerns in the Pentateuch is for these persons, a fact which serves only to underline the importance and dignity of the individual human being under Israelite law.

²¹Lev. 19:17, 18. All quotations of biblical texts are from the RSV.

The poor were a major concern. One of the main purposes of the tithe was to assure that the needy would be fed. "... you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce ... and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow ... shall come and eat and be filled ...,"²² states a general policy of concern which pervades the Pentateuch. This policy of providing food for the poor is stated in Exodus 23 as the basis for permitting the land to rest every seventh year:

For six years you shall sow your land and gather its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beasts may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.²³

Similar is the provision directing that grain and olives and grapes be left by harvesters for the poor to come and take.²⁴ Even beyond this, the poor are to have unusual rights

to take food from private property:

When you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your vessel. When you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you may not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.²⁵

Further protection for the poor is found in the laws on borrowing and lending. A particularly important rule was that which provided for debtors (except foreigners) a complete release of debts every seven years.²⁶ Complementary to this regulation was the provision requiring men to lend to the poor even though the seventh year was about at hand.²⁷ Nevertheless, interest was not to be charged "to your brother" (although it could be charged of a foreigner)²⁸ and strict laws were set forth regulating the taking of pledges as security for loans (particularly poignant: "No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge; for he would be taking a life in pledge").²⁹

²²Deut. 14:28-29; Deut. 26. See also the provisions in Deut. 16:9ff relative to feeding the needy on feast days.

²³Ex. 23:10-11. Note that in Lev. 25:1-7, 20-22 the rationale is different, but the policy of providing for the poor still subsists.

²⁴Deut. 24:19-22; Lev. 19:9-10. See also Lev. 25:35-38.

²⁶Deut. 15:1-3. This provision undoubtedly underlies our modern statutes of limitations for debt and further provided the needed benefits of our bankruptcy laws today.

²⁷Deut. 15:7-11.

²⁸Ex. 22:25; Deut. 23:19-20.

²⁹Deut. 24:6; 24:10, Ex. 22:26. These restrictions undoubtedly severely limited loan transactions (Mendenhall, *op. cit.*, p. 19, suggests that this system broke down under the force of the commercial economy of the monarchy); but when coupled with the command to lend to the poor and with the other Pentateuchal provisions for the poor, it seems apparent that these laws were designed to protect the poor and not to harm them by making funds hard to borrow.

Other miscellaneous provisions are included for the protection of the poor. Hired servants are to be paid on the day of their work,³⁰ poor who sell their lands are to have a right of redemption before the year of Jubilee,³¹ and an Israelite was to have the right to redeem his brother who has become poor and has sold himself to a stranger or sojourner.³² Furthermore, it is provided that "if your brother becomes poor beside you, and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: he shall be with you as a hired servant and a sojourner . . . (and he) shall not be sold as (a) slave(s)."³³

All these provisions demonstrate a definite basic concern on the part of the covenant community for the welfare of the poor. Their welfare was protected, and personal property rights of the more fortunate were abridged in their behalf in a way that would be unthinkable under modern-day law. Even the poor had human dignity and rights in Israel.

As we have seen above, foreigners did not have the same legal rights and protection in loan transactions as did the native Israelite. Similarly foreigners could be held as slaves without any right of redemption or

release³⁴ although similar holding was not allowed as to native Israelites; animals which had died of themselves could be sold to foreigners even though the Israelites were not permitted to eat them;³⁵ the Amalekites³⁶ and the foreign people in the promised land³⁷ were to be destroyed; and no Ammonite or Moabite was to be permitted to enter the assembly of the Lord, even to the tenth generation.³⁸ Nevertheless, such statements antagonistic to foreigners were certainly the exception to the general rule. The basic rule clearly was, "You shall have one law for the sojourner and for the native,"³⁹ and this was confirmed by statements such as, "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,"⁴⁰ "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner,"⁴¹ "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong . . . (he) shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,"⁴² and the frequent statements including foreigners and sojourners among those to benefit from provisions requiring food to be left for or given to the poor. Of par-

³⁰Deut. 24:14; Lev. 19:13b.

³¹Lev. 25:39-43.

³²Lev. 25:44-46.

³³Deut. 14:21.

³⁴Deut. 25:17-19.

³⁵Deut. 20:10-18.

³¹Lev. 25:25-28.

³²Lev. 25:47-55.

³³Deut. 23:3-6.

³⁴Lev. 24:22.

³⁵Ex. 22:21.

³⁶Deut. 24:17.

³⁷Lev. 19:33-34.

ticular light on the matter of dealing with foreigners is the provision requiring an Israelite who has taken a beautiful woman in battle to allow her to mourn for a month before going in to her, and prohibiting her sale and ordering her freedom if she does not prove to be a delight.⁴³ Thus we see that foreigners were under the protection of Israelite law and as a general rule were to be accorded the same rights and dignity as the Hebrew brethren.

Slaves also had a remarkable measure of protection. Both Exodus and Deuteronomy set forth the requirement that the Hebrew slave must be freed after six years' service.⁴⁴ Whether or not this provision actually was enforced is brought into question by the fact that Leviticus contains the apparently contradictory statement calling for such slaves to be freed only in the year of Jubilee.⁴⁵ In any event, it seems that it was Israelite policy that a Hebrew slave could not be held perpetually against his own will. Furthermore, we find provisions requiring owners to be punished who struck their slaves and caused their immediate death,⁴⁶ requiring a slave to be freed when an owner destroyed his eye or tooth,⁴⁷

and even requiring the protection of a slave who had escaped from his master.⁴⁸ In addition there is the unusual provision which made an *amah* more of a wife than a slave:

When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed: he shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt faithlessly with her. If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as a daughter. If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing or her marital rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.⁴⁹

Thus it is apparent that even the slaves had certain clearly defined rights (even though they were limited) which tended to preserve their rights and dignity as human beings and which their masters were not free to deny.

AS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED above, the rights which were accorded to the poor, to the strangers, and to slaves give solid proof of the high regard that the Israelites had for human rights and dignity. Going beyond this approach, we also find nu-

⁴³Deut. 21:10-14.

⁴⁴Ex. 21:2-6; Deut. 15:12-13.

⁴⁵Lev. 25:8-17, 39-43. See Jeremiah 34 on the question of freeing slaves.

⁴⁶Ex. 21:20. Apparently the death penalty was imposed on the master—which would be absolutely unique in history.

⁴⁷Ex. 21:26.

⁴⁸Deut. 23:15.

⁴⁹Ex. 21:7-11.

merous miscellaneous provisions applicable to the people generally which confirm this fact. The needs, feelings, and general welfare of men as a whole were provided for in a number of ways. Men were to be assured a certain amount of rest:

Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is in your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.⁵⁰

Note that the purpose of the sabbath was to be for rest for all.⁵¹ Other provisions showing genuine concerns for individuals are the laws exempting from military service a man with a new vineyard or a new wife,⁵² protecting the reputation of a virgin,⁵³ requiring one who seduces a virgin to marry her,⁵⁴ requiring a man to marry his brother's

widow when she has not yet borne a son "to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel,"⁵⁵ prohibiting the cursing of the deaf or the putting of a stumbling block in the path of the blind,⁵⁶ prohibiting slander,⁵⁷ requiring respect and honor for elderly men and parents,⁵⁸ and requiring a parapet on the roof of a new house to protect people from falling to their death.⁵⁹

Conversely many actions considered to be degrading to human beings and society were sharply prohibited. Particularly under ban were sex violations. Harlotry and general wickedness were seen to be interrelated: "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of wickedness."⁶⁰ Incest⁶¹ and sodomy⁶² and adultery⁶³ were flatly prohibited, and the death penalty was required except where one party clearly had mitigating circum-

⁵⁰Deut. 5:13-15. See the similar provision in Ex. 23:12.

⁵¹In Ex. 20:8-11, of course, the motivation for Sabbath rest is merely stated to be that it was on the seventh day that God rested after spending six days in creation, and that therefore men should rest on the seventh day.

⁵²Deut. 20:5-8; 24:5.

⁵³Deut. 22:13-19.

⁵⁴Deut. 22:28-29; Ex. 22:16.

⁵⁵Deut. 25:5-10.

⁵⁶Lev. 19:14.

⁵⁷Lev. 19:16a.

⁵⁸Lev. 19:32; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Lev. 19:3; Ex. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21.

⁵⁹Deut. 22:8.

⁶⁰Lev. 19:29.

⁶¹Deut. 22:30; Lev. 18:6-18; Deut. 27:20, 22; Lev. 20:11-12, 14, 17, 19-21.

⁶²Lev. 18:23; Deut. 27:21; Lev. 18:22, 23; Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:13, 15-16.

⁶³Lev. 18:20; Deut. 22:20-27; Lev. 20:10.

stances (such as a betrothed virgin caught by a man in open country where her cries could not be heard⁶⁴). A woman who was not found to be a virgin upon marriage was to be stoned to death, "because she has wrought folly in Israel by playing harlot in her father's house."⁶⁵ Undoubtedly such harsh measures were designed not to destroy the lives and rights of the people involved but to act as a real deterrent to the expression of sex drives.

Human life, of course, was highly regarded by Israelite law. We have already seen something of this in the prohibition against taking a mill or an upper millstone in pledge and in the requirement for a parapet on roofs. The Decalogue prohibited malicious killing,⁶⁶ and only in the case of unpremeditated homicide could the death penalty be escaped.⁶⁷ Similarly a man whose ox had gored a man to death and who had known that his ox had gored before was to be put to death.⁶⁸ Beyond this, men were to be put to death for only the most serious penalties, such as sex crimes (as we have seen), the stealing of a man,⁶⁹ cursing or striking

parents,⁷⁰ being a stubborn and rebellious son,⁷¹ and offering children as burnt offerings.⁷² Offenses against property were not punishable by death in Israel.

This last provision carries us into another realm of capital offenses, *i.e.*, offenses against God. Over against God, no one has rights. Not only was the offering of children as sacrifices an offense against human rights and dignity, but—even more important—it was an offense against God, and the death penalty was invoked. Similarly the death penalty was prescribed for those who sought to entice Israel to other gods,⁷³ those who apostatized,⁷⁴ false prophets,⁷⁵ sorcerers, mediums and wizards,⁷⁶ and blasphemers.⁷⁷ Even aside from violations such as these, the basic principle that men had no rights as against God persisted. "The first born of your sons you shall give to me. You shall do likewise with your oxen and with your sheep⁷⁸ You shall do no work with the firstling of your herd, nor shear the firstling of your flock."⁷⁹ On the same basis, the law declared "The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house

⁶⁴Deut. 22:25-27.

⁶⁵Deut. 22:20-21.

⁶⁶Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

⁶⁷Ex. 21:12-14; Deut. 19:1-13; Lev. 24:17; Nu. 35.

⁶⁸Ex. 21:29.

⁶⁹Deut. 24:7.

⁷⁰Ex. 21:15, 17.

⁷¹Deut. 21:18-21.

⁷²Deut. 12:31; 18:10; Lev. 19:20; 20:1-5.

⁷³Deut. 13:9; 13:12ff.

⁷⁴Deut. 17:2-5; Ex. 22:20; Deut. 27:15; Lev. 19:4.

⁷⁵Deut. 18:20.

⁷⁶Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27.

⁷⁷Lev. 24:16.

⁷⁸Ex. 22:29b; Ex. 13:2. As a matter of fact, the Levites were taken by God in place of the first-born sons: Nu. 3:11-13, 45; 8:14-18.

⁷⁹Deut. 15:19.

of the Lord your God;⁸⁰ and all increase was subject to the tithe.⁸¹ The return of lands in the year of Jubilee was also based on God's absolute right as against all men: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me."⁸² The same principle undoubtedly underlay the prohibition against mixtures⁸³ and the prohibition against partaking of the produce of the promised land during the initial years there.⁸⁴

Beyond such restrictions, however, the law was quite explicit in protecting the right of private property. Landmarks⁸⁵ and birthrights⁸⁶ were protected, lost or strayed property was to be returned,⁸⁷ trespasses and other torts were declared to be offenses for which recompense had to be made,⁸⁸ theft⁸⁹ and coveting⁹⁰ were prohibited, a relatively elaborate law of trusts was set forth,⁹¹ honest weights and measures were required,⁹² and men were required even to assist their fellows' ox or ass when in distress.⁹³ From such provisions, the conclusion cannot be escaped that the right of private property was quite highly re-

garded in Israel, subject only, as we have seen, to the rights of the poor and needy, and of God. Particularly important to note is that property rights never were prior to human needs, *i.e.*, human rights and dignity as a whole as a matter of policy were seen to override and supersede individual property rights, as important as they were. Here again, we have much to learn today from ancient Israel.

NCESSARY TO THE MAINTENANCE of such a concern for human rights and dignity as we have seen was an unbiased system of equal justice for all. As Mendenhall has pointed out, justice was a prime consideration under Israelite law.⁹⁴ Each of the three basic formulations of law, *i.e.*, JE, D, P (or some equivalent of these designations), expressed the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.⁹⁵ However, in each of the cases where this appears, the statement is in relation to some specific offense or body of offenses, and thus it seems that this was an expression of binding basic policy rather

⁸⁰Ex. 23:19. See also Deut. 18:3, 4.

⁸¹Deut. 14:22-27.

⁸²Lev. 25:23.

⁸³Deut. 22:9; Lev. 19:19.

⁸⁴Lev. 19:23-25.

⁸⁵Deut. 19:4; 27:7.

⁸⁶Deut. 21:15-17.

⁸⁷Ex. 23:4; Deut. 22:1-3; Lev. 6:2-5.

⁸⁸Ex. 22:5; 21:28-31; 21:33-34; 21:35; 22:6; Lev. 24:18.

⁸⁹Ex. 20:15; Deut. 5:19; Lev. 19:11; Ex. 22:1-4; Lev. 6:2-5.

⁹⁰Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.

⁹¹Ex. 22:7-15; Lev. 6:2-5.

⁹²Deut. 25:13-16; Lev. 19:35-36.

⁹³Ex. 23:5; Deut. 22:4.

⁹⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁹⁵Ex. 21:22; Deut. 19:21; Lev. 24:19.

than a formulation intended to be executed literally.⁹⁶ The policy is otherwise expressed:

You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you bear witness in a suit, turning aside after a multitude, so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his suit You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his suit Keep from a false charge, and do not slay the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked.⁹⁷

It is to be noted that false or colored testimony is condemned. Elsewhere there are other statements prohibiting this,⁹⁸ and provision is made for false witnesses to receive the punishment they had intended for another.⁹⁹ Other declarations to implement justice are those prohibiting bribes,¹⁰⁰ requiring the testimony of two or three witnesses to convict a man of a crime,¹⁰¹ and requiring a man condemned by a judge to be punished in his presence.¹⁰² Two other passages indicating the Israelite's deep concern for justice are these:

The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.¹⁰³

If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity.¹⁰⁴

Of course, slaves did not have equal rights, as we have seen, but it seems clear that they were to obtain full justice as far as their rights went.

There are several provisions in the Pentateuch which appear to deny equal justice and human rights and dignity which cannot pass unnoticed. Lepers are placed under strict limitations¹⁰⁵ and garments or houses that are leprous are to be destroyed.¹⁰⁶ However, these provisions are no more than reasonable exercises of the police powers of the state, particularly in view of the elaborate procedures provided to cleanse and test leprous clothing and buildings before destruction, and in view of the clearly defined procedures for returning a leper to normal society upon his return to health.¹⁰⁷ Two other provisions seem quite harsh also:

He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the Lord No bastard shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord.¹⁰⁸

Clearly these provisions are excep-

⁹⁶See Mendenhall, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁹⁷Ex. 23:1-3, 6-7; see also Lev. 19:15.

⁹⁸Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:20.

⁹⁹Deut. 19:16-19.

¹⁰⁰Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:18-20.

¹⁰¹Deut. 17:6; 19:15.

¹⁰²Deut. 25:1-3.

¹⁰³Deut. 24:16.

¹⁰⁴Lev. 5:1.

¹⁰⁵Lev. 13:45-46.

¹⁰⁶Lev. 13:47; 14:43.

¹⁰⁷See Lev. 13-14.

¹⁰⁸Deut. 23:1, 3.

tions to the general concern for human rights and dignity, but they appear to apply only to entering the assembly of the Lord and would not affect their rights otherwise. Furthermore, it must be recognized that the designation "bastard" did not apply to children born out of wedlock (as today) but had reference to the products of incestuous unions (*e.g.*, the Ammonites and Moabites).

Thus it is apparent that the Pentateuchal laws as a whole reflect a high regard for individual human dignity and rights. The various passages reflect a remarkable unity of aim and policy. Whether the various "codes" represent different times or different places or both, they still can be treated as a whole without any wrenching or manipulation of any sort. The individual human being was important in Israel, and protection of his status as an important being was the keynote of these laws to a remarkable extent.

WHAT WAS THE SOURCE of these laws? As we have seen above, the form and structure of the Pentateuchal laws is quite similar to the form and structure of Mesopotamian and Hittite laws. As a result various

scholars see these laws as being influential in the formation of the laws of the Pentateuch. Pfeiffer stands in the school of scholars who argue that the Covenant Code (Ex. 20:22—23:33; 34) preserves the old Canaanite code of civil laws.¹⁰⁹ Mendenhall to the contrary declares relative to the same material, "All of this legal material is usually attributed to the Canaanites in flagrant contradiction of everything which is known," and asserts that much was borrowed from Babylonian background.¹¹⁰ And both men are wrong, it seems to me, as to the distinctive character of the laws of the Pentateuch applicable to human rights and dignity; for neither the code of Hammurabi¹¹¹ nor the Hittite laws¹¹² demonstrate anything comparable to the high level of Israelite legal concern over these matters.

The Code of Hammurabi has only brief statements on justice, one each in the Prologue, the body of The Laws, and the Epilogue.¹¹³ Virtually the only concern was for the protection and outlining of property rights, and for the demarking of crimes and their punishments. No concern for the poor or foreigners or rights of slaves is apparent. Furthermore, all

¹⁰⁹Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹¹⁰Mendenhall, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹¹¹James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 163-180.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 188-197.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 164, 166, 178.

personal rights were made dependent on a rigid system of status. The spirit of this body of laws is well presented by the following extract:

209: If a seignior struck a(nother) seignior's daughter and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus.

210: If that woman has died, they shall put his daughter to death.

211: If by a blow he has caused a commoner's daughter to have a miscarriage, he shall pay five shekels of silver.

212: If the woman had died, he shall pay one-half mina of silver.

213: If he struck a seignior's female slave and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay two shekels of silver.

214: If that female slave has died, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.¹¹⁴

Such laws, although they may have contributed to the form of Israelite law can hardly have been the basis of its concern for human rights and dignity.

The Hittite laws stand even farther apart from the laws of the Pentateuch in this respect. The primary concern is for property rights and not for individuals. Again the poor and the foreigners are not considered, and the slaves are subjected to severe punishments (such as mutilation) without any concern for the fact that they are human. All legal relations are seen as cut-and-dried with no

room for flexibility as to situations or punishments. The whole tone is harsh, and little concern is given for the human aspects of any situation. The following excerpts are fairly representative of this body of law:

26B: If a man divorces a woman, and she . . . , he may sell her; whoever (buys her) shall give twelve shekels of silver.

31: If a free man and a slave-girl (are) *lovers* and they cohabit, he takes her for his wife, they found a family and have children, but subsequently, either (as) they quarrel or (as) they reach a friendly agreement, they break up the family, the man receives the children, but the woman receives one child.

35: If an overseer or shepherd elopes with a free woman and does not bring the bride price for her, she becomes a slave for three years.

42: If anyone hires a man and he goes to war and dies, if the hire has been given, there will be no compensation. If his hire has not been given, he shall give one person and as hire he will give 12 shekels of silver, and as the hire of a woman he will give 6 shekels of silver.

44: If anyone pushes a man into a fire so that he dies, he will give his son . . .¹¹⁵

No hint of concern for individual human rights emerges here in a manner at all comparable to Israelite law.

As a result of these contrasts, there is no alternative but to place the roots of the distinctive concern of Pentateuchal laws where they purport to

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. (The omissions within paragraph 26B are omissions in the basis text).

be, *i.e.*, in God. Here is the real key to the concern of the Israelites for human lives and being. Here is the source of the love for men which the Pentateuchal laws exhibit. Here is the source of human worth and dignity. The constant references to God and his will and demands in these laws are not merely legal fictions. The covenant with God *is* the basis of the distinctive flavor and concern of Israelite law. As Mendenhall has declared,

Israelite traditions regarded the covenant at Sinai as the event which brought into existence Israel as a distinct religious community The covenant at Sinai was the formal means by which the semi-nomadic clans, recently

emerged from a state of slavery in Egypt, were bound together in a religious political community. The text of that covenant is the Decalogue Therefore, the Decalogue was simply a stipulation of the obligations to the deity which the community accepted as binding. It is not as such law, for there are no provisions in the Decalogue itself for the action of the community against an offender. The Decalogue is, however, the source of community policy in law and the latter immediately begins to carry out that policy for the simple reason that the community cannot risk bringing upon itself the wrath of the deity because of breach of covenant committed by a single member ¹¹⁶

God had called for peculiar concern for human rights and dignity, and the laws of the Pentateuch reflect this call. Men are the concern of God.

¹¹⁶Mendenhall, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Sometimes it may be thou art meant indeed
To answer thine own prayers; but be advised
That no man yet hath quicken'd his own soul.

—P. B. Clayton, *Counsel*.

Book Reviews

Ground Plan of the Bible, by Otto Weber, translated by Harold Knight. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, [1959]. Pp. 221. \$3.95.)

The dust jacket of this book heralds it as a new handbook of the Bible written in a historical, theological, and critical approach for both the layman and the seminarian. Most "everyman" books usually reach no one, but this is not true of this book.

To Weber the Bible is a book to be read seriously. Its reading does not merit special insight but only the attention that it merits. God's word is the self-disclosure of God. In the Old Testament this was delivered to particular men, but in the New Testament this was done by the one who became the word incarnate, Jesus Christ. It is only as we come to understand him that we are able to understand the Bible. While the author accepts conclusions of biblical criticism which some believe annihilates faith, he feels that this is no detriment since faith lives by the intrinsic truths of scripture. Throughout scripture Weber finds a God that is sovereign. This God speaks "yes" to man. In response man is to surrender himself and trust in God alone.

Within this book there are many sections that merit special consideration—the Covenant, the Law, Wisdom and Success, the Imprecatory

Psalms, and Demon Possession. Perhaps the most stimulating theme that the author finds in scripture is that the hope of the Bible is not without a "this-worldly emphasis." Hope is not fixed on the beyond of the soul but on the rule of the creator. Weber also might arouse one with the thought that the passion narrative of Mark does not begin with 11:1 or 14:1 but with 3:7. All the material presented is academically sound but written in a manner and language that a layman can comprehend. Even if the pastor can find nothing new in this book for himself, the volume will be of value as a reference for laymen.

In many instances very brief explanations are given of some books or group of books. However, there are several books that are omitted completely. This is unfortunate in a work of this nature. If this is a blueprint of scripture, why should some of the rooms be hidden?

The format of this book is useful. Chapter subdivisions and italics aid reference work. A brief chronological table is given. The volume could have been further enhanced by an expanded general index and an index of

scriptural references. Since this is a book for laymen, it is fortunate that footnotes are almost non-existent. This and the lack of a bibliography of any form is a distinct disadvantage

to the student.

A word of praise must be given the translator. With the exception of several difficult sentences he has rendered very readable English.

The Book of the Acts of God: Christian Scholarship Interprets the Bible, by G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957. Pp. 372. \$4.95.)

As part of Doubleday's "Christian Faith Series" this book was written primarily for laymen in the manner in which these two scholars present the Bible to seminary students. The Old Testament sections were written by Dr. Wright and the intertestamental and New Testament sections by Dr. Fuller. As a book primarily for lay people this book partially has missed its mark. The Old Testament and intertestamental sections are presented in a manner a layman readily can understand; much of the New Testament portion would be incomprehensible to the same layman. In many places the language and style of the author is difficult. Often a semester of seminary study seems to be presupposed. This is no criticism of the material presented. All of this book, New Testament included, commends itself to the pastor for serious consideration and study. It is a panorama of scripture as viewed by Christian scholarship.

As the title implies, this volume seeks to show God's activity in history as set forth in scripture. Christianity is a historical religion. Faith has been set in the forms of history. Knowledge of God is inseparably bound with the understanding of history's meaning. Two things are held in tension: one is God's direction and control of history for his own purpose, and the other is the terrible sin of man and his resultant responsibility. God has acted through a series of deeds to rectify man's malaise. These acts began with Abraham and were culminated in the act "God was in Christ." In Jesus the Christ is the redemptive act of God.

With the exceptions concerning laymen noted above, the material in this book is quite balanced and well written. Almost every section of the work seems to deserve particular mention. The third section entitled "Between the Old and New Testaments" is outstanding. Although brief

it vividly supplements the Old and New Testament portions with the historical and religious development of that period. Description of the Jewish thought and religion extends from Philo and Josephus to the Damascus Covenanters and the Qumran Community. In the latter some of the early conceptions from the Dead Sea scrolls are set in proper perspective.

Omission of comment on several "minor" prophets and a paragraph explaining "apocalypticism" leaves a

question in one's mind. Are these books to be regarded as "classical prophecy" or as apocalyptic literature? No answer is given in this book.

Although no bibliography is given, there are some suggestions for Bible study aids. An extensive table of contents is of value, but this does not compensate for the lack of a general index.

—Howard Eshbaugh, '56.

The Life and Teaching of Jesus, by Edward W. Bauman. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960. Pp. 240. \$3.95.)

The Life and Teaching of Jesus is a companion volume to Edward Bauman's television series by the same title. Bauman's program appeared for eight months each Saturday from 12:30 to 1:30 P.M. over Channel 7 in Washington, D. C. Its viewers numbered about 80,000 including some senators, armed forces personnel, and many students who watched the lectures for college credit. And "lectures" the programs were. There were Dr. Bauman, a blackboard, a desk (which he often sat on but

never behind), maps, and some movie film and pictures. All of the ingredients were standard for a run-of-the-mill teaching program—all except Bauman himself. He was extremely relaxed—hands in his pockets, coming up with a story about every point he wanted to emphasize. He wanted the audience to *feel* the subject. He wanted his viewers to *feel* what it was like to live in Palestine during the time Jesus lived there. He said on one of his first telecasts, "The whole Gospel story suddenly springs

to life with electric excitement really as we feel the pressures upon Jesus, as we feel the misunderstandings of the disciples, as we're hungry with the people, longing for food for our children, and as we long if necessary to kill and to die, even, to throw off this Roman overlord."

Bauman writes with the same intention as he broadcasts. He must constantly hold the desire to have his reader *feel* the time, the place, and the people about whom he's writing. His writing has a nice style. It's easy reading, not dogmatic: he offers most of the usual alternatives in interpretation and many simple theological explanations (three theories of atonement, "at-one-ment," are explained in three paragraphs).

Although this book is divided into two main sections, I. "The Life of Jesus" and II. "The Teachings of Jesus," Bauman strongly emphasizes the fact that the life and teaching of Jesus can never be separated. "In the following chapters . . .," he writes, "we will never lose sight of his life while seeking the meaning of his message."

Bauman, like Jesus, knows the power of a simple story. "Long after some men had forgotten his exact words, they could still 'see' the shepherd out in the wilderness looking for the lost sheep, the woman sweep-

ing the house for the lost coin, the father running down the road to welcome his lost son." Some of Bauman's little stories are parables themselves: the one of the small boy about to undergo an operation, who looked up at his father just before receiving the anesthetic and asked, "You'll go all the way with me, won't you, Daddy?" Bauman adds to this story, "The Christian feels that in the crucifixion God has gone all the way with sinful man in offering his forgiving love."

The Life and Teaching of Jesus is meant to be used as an introduction for the student and general reader. Bauman has presented the material so that it not only stands as a complete story but points the way to further study. It should serve as a welcome text for adult study groups as well as a fresh, provocative review for the teaching minister.

Dr. Bauman is an ordained Methodist minister; and since 1957 he has been University Chaplain and Assistant Professor of Religion at the American University, Washington, D. C. He is also lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington. He is the author of another book, *Intercessory Prayer*.

—Fred Rogers, '62.

Teach Yourself New Testament Greek, by D. F. Hudson. (New York: Association Press, 1960. Pp. xiv + 178. \$3.75.)

This "Life Enrichment Book" encourages us to "learn the language the disciples spoke"—without a teacher by "a new stay-at-home method." If this brash book could make good its claim, Greek would soon be an entrance requirement for seminary.

The work was produced in India; and one may suppose that with certain school training and atmosphere which are not ordinarily encountered in the United States, the method might be effective. Given our Latinless preparation, however, among students who somehow remain immune to English grammar itself, this reviewer will plead skepticism.

This is not to belittle the obvious merits of the book. There is no need to confront the beginner in New Testament Greek with a labyrinthine maze of forms (many of which he will seldom if ever see), an over-detailed network of syntax, and a vocabulary whose relationship to actual New Testament frequencies is peripheral. Hudson shows up well here over most other elementary grammars.

But even so this reviewer prefers an inductive approach. While the presentation in this book is carefully structured and the explanations are jauntily simplified, there is *still* unnecessary complication of grammar and syntax and a vocabulary that should have been strained through Metzger's *Lexical Aids*. For this reason, it is not very practical as a handbook for inductive study; but it would be admirable for reference and review.

One section (pp. 108-111) is worth the price of the book: a series of pertinent and amusing cartoons—"An Adventure with a Lion"—illustrates the basic meanings of the prepositions (including a variation on the Jonah theme!). There are also a paradigm of *luo*, a grouped list of verbs, a key to exercises, and a modest vocabulary.

The author is Anglican and a teacher at the language school in Darjeeling, India.

—James Arthur Walther.

Books Received

The New English Bible: New Testament. (Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1961. Pp. xiv + 447. \$4.95.)

This is the first installment of what may be *the* publishing event of the decade. A committee of scholars from eleven cooperating British bodies, under the direction of Dr. C. H. Dodd, has been laboring for thirteen years to produce this translation. Not intended to be a "revision" in any respect, it is "a genuinely new translation" which attempts to be faithful both to the original Greek as understood in the light of all up-to-date knowledge and to the idiom of mid-twentieth-century English. We intend to publish an extended review of this eagerly-anticipated book in an early issue.

A Bibliography of Bible Study for Theological Students. ("Princeton Seminary Pamphlets," No. 1. 2d ed. revised & enlarged. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1960. Pp. 107. \$1.00.)

A useful tool brought up to date.

The Secret Sayings of Jesus: The Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, by Robert M. Grant, with David Noel Freedman. (Dolphin Books. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960. Pp. 198. \$.95.)

A welcome paperback edition of an important work. See *Perspective* I.1 (March 1960) p. 22.

Understanding the New Testament, by Howard Clark Kee and Franklin W. Young. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957. Pp. xviii + 492. \$9.65.)

A beautiful book, modern in most respects, with the exception of some of its critical conclusions. See *Perspective* I.4 (December 1960) p. 45.

Love So Amazing, by D. Reginald Thomas. (Westwood, N. J.: Revell, 1961. Pp. 127. \$2.50.)

Sermons by the Welsh-born pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown, Philadelphia.

The Cross Still Stands: The Friday of the Crucifixion, by Alfred Doerffler. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960. Pp. 135. \$2.50.)

The Gospel Miracles, by Ronald S. Wallace. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960. Pp. xiii + 161. \$3.50.)

The Seven Last Words, by Clarence W. Cranford. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960. Pp. 78. \$1.50.)

High Pretences to and a great Bluster about Faith and Experiences, when the Things are not crown'd with a holy and humble Conversation, are justly rejected by the Sober and Judicious, as Instances of Hypocrisy and Delusion.

—Gilbert Tennent, *The Nature of Justification Opened*.

